

The School of Nightingale

# SERMON

Preach'd before the King,

Octob<sup>r</sup> 1666.

At the SOLEMN FAST appointed

For the late

FIRE in LONDON.

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Dean of S. Pauls

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THE BIRMINGHAM

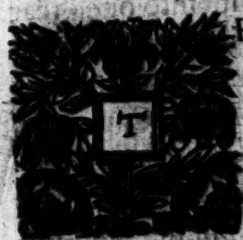
WEDNESDAY

1850



the sixth ISAIAH.. xxvi. 9. ver. 12. ¶

—When thy Judgments are in the Earth,  
The Inhabitants of the World will  
learn Righteousness. ¶



His Chapter with the two next before, and that, which follows, are all four parts of the same prophetick Sermon, (as appears by those words so often repeated in them, *In that Day*, fixing and determining All to the same Epoch, and period of Time;) belong All to the same subject Matter, *sc.* the Destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, whether by the Babylonians, or the Romans, or both. So that the Earth (or as we may rather translate, the Land,

or the Countrey) wasted, and utterly spoiled, and turn'd upside down, Cap. xxiv. is doubtless the Land of *Jery*. And the World that languisheth, and fadeth away, V. 4. of that Cap. not much wider; that, and the Neighboring Regions, with whom the *Jews* had commerce, and intercourse of Peace, and War, *Moab*, and *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, in a word, the *Jewish World*; (for so both the *Hebrew* and *Greek* words usually translated *the Earth and the World*, are often in Scripture-language contracted and limited by the Matter in hand :) And consequently the *City of Confusion*, which is broken down, a *City* turn'd *Chaos* again, as the *Hebrew* imports, Cap. xxiv. 10. the *City* turn'd into a *Heap*, or a *Ruine*, nay, in *tumulum*, as the *Vulgar Latine*, or *שִׁטְמוֹן*, as the *Lxx.* translate it, into one great *Sepulchre* to it self, buried in its own *Rubbish*, Cap. xxv. 2. The *lofty City* laid *low*, even to the ground, and abased in the very *Dust*. Cap. xxvi. 5. The *City* desolate, and forsaken, and left *Wilderneß*, and desert all over, Cap. xxviii. 18. are but so many variations of the phrase, and signifie all the same thing, the burning of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, or *Titus*, or (as some will have it) by both.

This sad Devastation the Prophet first beholds in *speculo prophetico*, sees it from far in his prophetick *Telescope*, as clearly, and distinctly, as



if it were before his eyes ; and describes it here,  
 and there the whole Sermon throughout, but  
 chiefly Cap.xxiv. in so lofty Language, that  
 many have mistaken it for the *End* of the  
 World, and the Consummation of all things.  
 But then, to sweeten so sad a Theme, he assures  
 them, it shall not be a Παρωληθεια, God will not  
 make a final End now : No, a Remnant shall be  
 left, *as the shaking of an Olive-tree, and as the*  
*gleaning Grapes, when the Vintage is done,*  
 Cap. xxiv. 13. Nor shall they be onely pre-  
 serv'd, but restor'd too ; *The Lord God will*  
*in time wipe away every Tear from off all* *Lacrymam-*  
*Faces,* and at last *swallow up this Death too* *Vulg.*  
*in Victory,* Cap. xxv. 8. He'll turn their  
 Captivities, and *rebuild* their City, and their  
 Temple too ; and All this shall be as it were *Life*  
*from the Dead,* as the Apostle calls it, so mira- *Rom. xi. 15*  
 culous a Re-establishment, at a Juncture so im-  
 probable, when they are destroyed out of all  
 Ken of Recovery, that it shall be a kind of  
 Resurrection ; and so like the great One, that  
 'tis described in the very proper phrases of that, *Ezek. xxxvi*  
 both by the other Prophets, and by Ours too *Dan. xii.*  
 a little below the Text, *Thy Dead shall live*  
*again ; My dead Bodies shall arise : Awake, and*  
*sing, ye that dwell in the Dust, &c.* And then,  
 (which is of nearest Concern to us, and to our  
 present Business ) the Prophet directs the  
 Remnant:

Remnant, that should escape, how to behave themselves under so great a Desolation ; and he contrives his Directions into a threefold Song (that they may be the better remarkt, and remembred) tun'd, and fitted to the three great Moments of the Event.

The first, to the time of the Ruine it self, Cap. xxiv. where having set before their eyes the sad prospect of the holy City, and *House of God* in Flames ; *When thus it shall be in the midst of the Land*, saith he, there shall be a Remnant, and they shall lift up their voyce, and sing for the Majesty of the Lord, saying, *Glorifie ye the Lord in the Fires*, V. 15. And this is שיר תהלה a Song of Praise.

The second is שיר מַעֲלֵה a Song of Degrees or Ascensions, fitted to the time of their Return, when All should be restor'd, and rebuilt again ; and that we have Cap. xxvii. 2. *In that Day sing ye unto her ; A Vineyard of Red Wine : I the Lord do keep it ; I will water it every moment ; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

The third (of which my Text is a principal strain) belongs to the whole middle Interval between the Ruine and the Restauration, in this xxvi. Cap. *In that day shall this Song be sung in the Land of Judah, We have a strong City ; Salvation will God appoint for Walls and*

*Bulwarks, &c.* As if he had said ; Though our City be ruin'd, yet God is still our dwelling place ; our Fortresses dismantled, and thrown down, but Salvation will He appoint us for Walls and Bulwarks ; Our Temples in the Dust, but God will be to us himself, *as a little* Ezek. xi. 16. *Sanctuary.* And this is שיר מִסְבִּיל a Song to give Instruction, teaching them, and in them us, how to demean our selves, while the Calamity lies upon us: *sc.* to make God our Refuge, *ver. 4.* to wait for him in the Way of his Judgments, *ver. 8.* and in this 9 *ver.* earnestly to desire him from the very soul in the Night ( in the Darkest, and Blackest of the Affliction ; ) to seek him early, when it begins to dawn towards a better condition ; and in the mean time, as 'tis in the Text, to improve all this severe Discipline, as he intends it, for the advancing us in the knowledge of Him, and of our selves, and of our whole Duty ; For When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.

A Text you see, that supposeth Judgments in the Earth, or upon a Land ( as its Occasion ) and so futable to our sad Condition : a Text too, that proposeth our Learning, as its End, and Design, and so futable ( one would think ) to our Inclination too. The Character, and Genius of the Age, we live in, is Learned :

the pretence at this day so high, and so univer-  
 sal, that He is No-body now, who hath not a  
 new *Système* of the World, a new *Hypothesis*  
 in Nature, a new *Model* of Government, a new  
*Scheme* of God's Decrees, and the greatest  
 Depths in Theology. We are many of us  
 acute Philosophers (that must not be disputed  
 us;) most of us grand Politicks, and Statesmen  
 too; All of us (without Exception) deep  
 Divines; — will needs be wiser, than our  
 Neighbours, but however wiser than our Tea-  
 chers, and Governors, if not wiser than God  
 himself. A kind of *Moral Rickets*, that swells,  
 and puffs up the Head, while the whole inner  
 Man of the Heart wastes, and dwindles. For like  
 2 Tim. iii. 6. 7 the *silly Women*, Disciples to the old *Gnosticks*,  
 while we are thus *ever learning* (pretending to  
 great Heights, and Proficiencies) we *come never*  
*to the knowledge of the Truth* (the Truth which  
 is according unto Godliness;) In fine, amongst  
 so many Learners they are but few, that learn  
 Righteousness: — And therefore God himself  
 here opens us a School; erects a severe Dis-  
 cipline in the Text; brings forth his *Ecular*,  
 and his Rods, when nothing else will serve the  
 Turn. For he hath indeed *four* Schools, or  
 rather four distinct Forms, and Classes in the  
 same great *School of Righteousness*; the  
 last only (that of his Judgments) express in the

Text, but the Rest too suppos'd at least, or covertly implied.

For whether we look upon the latter Clause of the proposition, *The Inhabitants of the World will learn*; We find our selves there under a double Formalitie, as Learners, and as Inhabiters. As Learners first, and so endu'd with Faculties of Reason; Powers of a Soul capable of Learning, what is to be learn'd; stamp'd, and possess'd with first Principles, and common Notions, which deeply search'd, and duly improv'd, and cultivated, might teach us Much of Righteousness. And this is *Schola Cordis in Domo interiori*, the School of the Heart, God's first School in the little World within us. Secondly, as Inhabitants of the great World, which is God's School too, as well as his Temple, full of Doctrines and Instructions; *Schola Orbis*, in which, He takes us forth continual Lessons of Righteousness, — *Séque ipsum in cunctis, & offert, Ut bene cognosci possit*; and that both from the Natural World, and from the Political; whether *Schola Regni*, or *Schola Ecclesiæ*. Or if we return to the former Branch of the Text, *When thy Judgments are in the Earth*: This when they are, supposeth another time, when they are not in the Earth, and that time is the time of love, (as the Prophet speaks) the Season of Mercy; So that, Thirdly, here's *Schola Misericordiarum*.

1.

Ezek. xvi. 8.

3.

*cordiarum*, the School of God's tender Mercies inviting us, gently leading, and *drawing us with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*: And lastly, when nothing else will serve, here's *Schola Judiciorum*, the School of God's severe Judgments driving us to Repentance, and compelling us to come in and learn Righteousness. A provision (you see) every way sufficient, and abundant for our Learning, were not we wanting to our selves.

But alas! we may run by the Text, and easily read in it these *three* things, as so many very Natural Deductions, and Emanations from it.

1. First, our own Ignorance and Stupiditie; *Born like a wilde Asse's Colt*, as *Zophar* speaks; and then to our Natural we add affected Ignorance too; So that we are much to seek, and to learn:
2. Righteousness it must be taught us. Secondly, God's infinite, and inexpressible Grace and Mercy to us; that when we had blurr'd the Original, defac'd the first Traces of Righteousness upon our Souls, he was pleas'd to provide Expedients to teach it us again the second time, that we might be *renewed unto Knowledge after the Image of him, that created us in Righteousness*, as the Apostle speaks. And Thirdly,
3. Our indocible and unteachable Honor, our foul and shameful Non-proficiency under so plentiful a Grace. For though the Text indeed speaks



speaks of our learning Righteousness, when God's Judgments are upon us; yet ( if the Appearances of the World abroad suggested nothing to the contrary ) 'tis introduc'd here in the Text too, as the Effect of the last Form in God's School, in exclusion of all the former as ineffectual; his utmost Method not to be used but at a pinch, when all the rest are frustrated, and prove improsperous upon us: And then 'tis exprest in the Original, and learned *Versions* with so many Limitations and Abatements ( as we shall see by, and by ) that we may well give it up, as the sum and upshot of All, That our All-merciful God omits no Means or Methods of our Improvement; but we ( supinely negligent, and prodigiously stubborn as we are ) render them all ineffectual.

That we may do so no longer, but rather make good the profession, with which we have dar'd to appear this Day before God, of humbling our selves under his Almighty Hand; Let us, before we pass on any further, lift up our Hands and our Hearts to him in the Heavens, beseeching him by the power of his mighty Grace so to sanctifie to us All, both the Sense of his present Judgments, and all our Meditations and Discourses thereupon, that by all we may be promoted in learning Righteousness.

Vid. Lactant.  
lib. v.

**T**He Inhabitants of the World will learn  
Righteousness or Justice : What's that ?  
Is there such a Thing in the World ? Or is it a  
Name onely, and a glorious Pretence ? Is it not  
onely another Word for Interest, or Utilitie, and  
so nothing just, but what is profitable ; Carneades  
his infamous Assertion retriv'd and own'd  
with open face by Christians ? Is it not the  
taking of a Party, or the espousing of a Faction,  
and appearing for it with heat and animosity ;  
and a savage condemning and destroying All  
that are not of it ? Is it not the Profession to be-  
lieve such a Systeme of Opinions, what Life so-  
ever is consequent thereupon ? an airy invifible  
Righteousness, that never embodies or appears  
in our Actions, but hovers in the Clouds, in  
speculations and fancies, where no Man can  
finde it ?

The Truth is, there is no piece of Unrighte-  
ousness more common in the World, than thus  
to weigh Justice its self in an unjust balance ;  
while every one contrives his *Hypothesis* so as to  
salve the *Phænomena*, so declares his Notion, as  
may best suit and comport with his own un-  
righteous practices. But the Righteousness, we  
are to learn in God's School, must not be a self-  
chosen Righteousness : We must not pay God,  
our Sovereign, the Tribute of our Obedience

in coyn of our own stamping ; It must be such  
as will abide the Touchstone of his Word, and  
the Balance of his Sanctuary. To make short,  
Righteousness or Justice, though elsewhere a  
single Vertue, yet here 'tis virtually All:

— Συλλήβδ'ω πᾶσ' ἀρετή' ἐστίν, said the Poet ; and *Theogn.*  
the Philosopher after him, 'Οὐ μέρος ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' *Ethic. v. i.*

ὅλη ἀρετή' ἐστίν, not a part, but all Vertue : And  
so often both in Scripture and Fathers, compre-  
hensively all Religion, the whole Duty of Man :

ἡ τῆς ἐντελευτῆς ἐκπληρωσις, saith S. Chrysostome : *Omnes* *Hom. 12. in*  
*Virtutum species uno Justitiæ nomine,* saith S. Je- *Matth.*

rome : Not a particular Star, nor a single Con-  
stellation, but a whole Heaven of Vertues, an  
entire Globe of Moral, and Christian Perfecti-  
ons ; an Universal Rectitude of the Will, con-  
forming us in all Points to God's Righteous  
Law, the Rule of our Righteousness : Or if  
you will in two words, 'tis *Summum cuique* to give  
every One his Due ; *Summum Deo* first, and then  
*Summum proximo* ; Give God his Due, and your  
Neighbor too ; These are the integral parts of  
it. So that Righteousness, as the great Rule of  
it hath two Tables, or, if you will two *Hemi-  
spheres*, the upper, and the nether ; Both so vast,  
that we cannot measure them in a Span (the  
Span of time allotted me :) I shall therefore  
contract them to the Occasion, and give you  
onely some of those particular Lessons of Right-  
eousness,

teousness, which this present Judgment of God upon our Land seems most clearly to take us forth, both in relation to God himself, and to our Neighbors ; and then call you, and my self to a serious Scrutiny, how well we have learn'd them, and so an end.

And first we begin (as we ought) in giving God his due ; in rendring to God the things that are Gods. To limit this wide Universality too, and render it more proper, and peculiar, we may reduce all to that first of *Esai's* three Songs mention'd at the beginning, *Glorifie ye the Lord in the Fires* ; giving him upon this sad Occasion the Glory of that great Trinity of his Attributes ; the Glory of his Power and Majesty ; the Glory of his Justice and Equity ; the Glory of his Goodness and Mercy.

C. xxiv. 15.

- I. Give him the Glory of his Power and Greatness ; which the Prophet calls, *singing for the Majesty of the Lord*, Cap. xxiv. 15. or *beholding the Majesty of the Lord, when his hand is lifted up*, in the Verse after my Text. How great and glorious our God is, who is in himself incomprehensible, appears best by the glorious greatness of his Works. If he builds, it is a World, Heaven and Earth, and the Fulness of both. If he gives, it is his onely Son out of his Bosom, the Brightness of his Glory, and the expresse Image of his person. If he rewards, 'tis a Crown, 'tis a whole

whole Heaven of Glories. If he be angry, he  
 sends a Deluge; opens the Cataracts of Heaven  
 above, and breaks up the Fountains of the  
 great Deep below, and pours forth whole  
 Flouds of Vengeance: Or else he rains down *Salvian*  
 Hell out of Heaven, and in a moment turns a  
 Land like the Garden of God into a dead Sea,  
 and a Lake of Brimstone. If he discover him-  
 self by any overt expression of his Power, though  
 the Intention be meer Mercy and loving Kind-  
 ness, Mortality shrinks from it, and cannot bear  
 it. When his Glory descends on Mount Sinai,  
 the people remove, and stand afar off, and *Let* *Ex. xx. 18.*  
*not God speak with us* (say they) *lest we die:* 19.  
 and *Depart from me, O Lord,* saith S. Peter, *Luc. v. 8.*  
 amaz'd at that miraculous draught of Fishes:  
 How much more should the Inhabitants of the  
 World tremble before him, when his great and  
 sore Judgments are in the Earth. *Tremble thou* *Pf. cxiv. 7, 8.*  
*Earth at the presence of God* (saith the Psalmist)  
 even when he improves *the hard Rock into a*  
*Springing Well:* Much more, when *a fruitful* *Pf. cvii. 34.*  
*Land he turns into Barrenness,* or a stately City  
 into Ashes, *for the wickedness of them that dwell*  
*therein. I am horribly afraid,* saith David, *for* *Pf. cxix. 53.*  
*the ungodly that forsake thy Law;* and I exceed- *Hebr. xii.*  
 ingly fear, and quake, said Moses, at the giving *21.*  
 of it: But when our Lord shall come again to  
 require it, *the Powers of Heaven shall be shaken* *Matth. xxiv.*  
 too; *29*

too; the Angels themselves (as S. Chrysostom interprets) though pure, and innocent Creatures shall tremble (*φείσονται*) to see the severity of that Judgment. How much rather ought we, wretched Creatures that we are, conscious to our selves of Dust, and Sin, to tremble, and quake at the Wrath of this dread Lord of the Universe; at who's Voice alone, the great Emperor *Caligula* runs under the Bed, and the mighty *Belshazzar's* loyns are loos'd, and his knees knock one against another, when God but writes bitter things against him on the Wall.

It were a vain Affectation, to attempt a Description of the greatness of our late horrible *Devastation*. This were to be *Ambitiosus in Malis*, to chew over all our Wormwood and our Gall again: This were *Rogum asciâ polire*, which the XII. Tables forbad; to carve and paint the wood of our funeral pile. I shall only call back your thoughts, to stand with me upon the prospect of that horrid Theatre of the divine Judgments, and say, *Come hither, and behold the Works of the Lord, what Desolation he hath made in the Earth*: And then who will not joyn with me to say upon so convincing an occasion, We humble our selves under the Almighty hand of God, the Lord of all the World; We adore his Power and Majesty in  
lowly



lowly prostrations ; before whom all the Na- 15  
tions of the World are as a *Drop of the Bucket*, Mai. xl. 15.  
the Globe of the Earth as the *small Dust* of the  
*Balance*, and who taketh up the Isles ( even our  
Great Britains too, as we call them ) as a very  
little thing. *Great and marvellous are thy Works*, Apoc. xv. 3, 4.  
O Lord God Almighty ! *Who would not fear thee,*  
*and glorifie thy Name, when thy Judgments are*  
*thus manifest ?* Thou hast brought them down  
that dwell on high, and laid the lofty City low,  
even to the Ground ; the *Joyous City* of our  
Solemnities, the *Royal Chamber*, the *Emporium*  
of the World, the *Mart* of Nations, the very  
*Top-gallant* of all our Glory in the Dust. *Even* Matth. xi. 26  
*so holy Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* We  
say not to our God, *What do'st thou ? Where-*  
*fore hath the Lord done thus to this great City ?*  
We reply not, we answer not again : *The Lord*  
*hath spoken ; Let all the Earth keep silence before*  
*him.* We acknowledge thy hand in it, O our  
God ; we submit to thy good pleasure in it ;  
we wait for thy Comfort, and thy Salvation in it.  
We meekly kiss the Rod that strikes us ! With  
dying Jacob we desire to worship *the* *rod* *of* *thy* *dis-* Hebr. xi. 21.  
*cipline*, with perfect Resignation as we are able,  
*leaning, and reposing upon the top of this thy*  
*severe Rod.* For *shall we receive Good at the* Job. ii. 10.  
*hand of our God, and shall we not receive Evil ?*  
*'Tis the same Blessed Hand that distributes and*

strikes; and with equal Reverence and Affection we adore it, whether He opens it wide in Bounty, or contracts it close in Severity: The One the divine *Rhetorick* to perswade us to learn Righteousness; the Other his more irrefragable *Logick* to convince and constrain us. And therefore We charge not our Maker foolishly; but meekly accept the punishment of our Iniquity. And having thus ador'd his power (which was the First) we go on in the next place to acknowledge his Justice too; saying with holy *DAVID*, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy Judgments*: The second part of God's Due,

2.

Give him the Glory of his *Justice* also; and if you learn no other Righteousness in his School, at least learn His, and frankly confess it too. For though God's Judgments may be secret, yet they cannot be unjust: *Like the great Deep* indeed, an *Abyss* unfathomable; But though we have no Plumb-line of Reason, that can reach it, our Faith assures us, there's Justice at the Bottom. *Clouds and Darknes* are round about him, saith the *Psalmist*; but as it follows, *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*: So much we may easily discern through all the Veils and Curtains that envelop him, that Justice stands always fast by his Judgment seat. And therefore though it be a nice,

Pf. cxix. 137.

Pf. xxxvi. 6.

Pf. xcvi. 2.

and a delicate point to assign the particular sins, for which God hath thus sorely afflicted us ; yet must we declare (as we are warranted by sacred Authority) *That God hath laid this heavy Judgment upon us All, as an Evidence of his Displeasure for our Sins in general.*

17  
The King's  
Declaration.

Not to engage in that Common Theme ; we may clear it a little by the Light of our own *Fires*, (the particular Instrument of our Calamity) in two or three Reflections upon that. God spake his righteous *Law* at first out of the midst of the *Fire*, *Exod. xix. 18.* And he shall appear from Heaven again in flaming *Fire*, *2 Thes. i. 8.* taking Vengeance on them that obey it not, saith the Apostle. Now as the Prophet *Amos* argues from another circumstance of Terror, wherewith the Law was given, the sound of the Trumpet (the first Trumpet certainly, we ever read of in any Record in the World, as the last Trumpet (the Apostle tells us) shall be that of the Arch-angel to summon us to account for it ; ) *Shall a Trumpet be blown* (and so say I, shall a *Fire* be kindled) *in the City* (nay, a whole City become but one great Fire) *and the people not be afraid* ; we not reflect upon our own Guiltiness before God, who came at first with a *Fiery Law* in his right hand to teach us our Duty, and shall come again at last with *fiery Indignation* at his left, to devour all those

*1 Cor. xv.*

*52.*

*Amos iii. 6.*

*Deut. xxxiii.*

*2.*

*Hebr. x. 27.*

2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.

that obey it not? Again, Fire and Water are the two great Instruments of God's double Vengeance upon the World of the Ungodly: The One long since past, recorded for our Instruction; the Other yet to come, the Matter (it ought to be, I am sure) of our continual Terror. *The World, that then was, perished by Water, (saith S. Peter) and the World, that is now, is reserv'd unto Fire:* In the mean time, Fire and Water, things of commonest Use with us, are also the standing Metaphors almost in every Verse of Scripture, to express God's Judgments of all sorts; Is it not on purpose to reminde us, when ever we hear the sound, or make use of the things, or feel the smart of either, to reflect upon the heavy Wrath of God against Sin in his solemn expressions of it? Once more; Fire is the *Tyrant* in Nature, the *King* of the Elements, the mighty *Nimrod* in the Material World. God hath given us this Active Creature for our Servant, and we degrade him to the meanest Offices, to the Drudgery of the Kitchen, and the labor of the Furnace. But God can infranchize him, when he please, and let him loose upon us; and for our Sins, of an useful servant, make him to us a rigorous, and a Tyrannical Master. You saw him the other Day, when he escap'd from all your Restraints, mockt all your Resistance,

scor'd

19  
scorn'd the Limits, you would have set him :  
Wing'd with our Guilt, he flew triumphant  
over our proudest Heights, waving his curl'd  
Head, seeming to repeat us that Lesson which  
holy S. *Austin* taught us long since, *That the in-*  
*ferior Creatures serve us Men, onely that we may*  
*serve him, who made both us, and them too.* If  
we rebel against Heaven, *Συνεπολεμήσει ὁ Κόσμος,*  
saith the *Wiseman* ; *the World shall rise in Arms* Will. v. 20  
*upon us, and fight with Him against the Un-*  
*wise.* Even the holy Fires of the Altar too,  
though kindled from Heaven on purpose to  
propitiate an angry Deity, prov'd many times  
through Man's provocations, the Instruments of  
his Fury ; the *Mercy-Seat* became the Arsenal  
of Vengeance, and from the presence of God  
himself went forth those Flames that so often  
devour'd his Adversaries : And all to teach us  
this Lesson, *That 'tis Sin puts the Thunder into*  
*Gods Hand, and turns Flames of Love into a*  
*consuming Fire.*

And therefore dream no longer of *Grana-*  
*does* or *Fire-Balls*, or the rest of those witty  
Mischiefs ; search no more for *Bontesiens* or *In-*  
*cendiaries*, *Dutch* or *French* : The *Dutch* *In-*  
*temperance*, and the *French* *Pride* and *Vanity*,  
and the rest of their Sins, we are so fond off,  
are infinitely more dangerous to us, than the  
Enmity of either Nation ; for these make God  
our

our Enemy too. Or if you'l needs finde out the Incendiary, look not abroad; *Intus hostis, intus periculum*, saith S. *Jerome*: Turn your Eyes inward into your own Bosoms; there lurks the great Make-bate, the grand *Boutefeu* between Heaven and us. Trouble not your selves with *Planetary Aspects*, or great *Conjunctions*; but for your own *Oppositions* direct and Diametral to God, and his Holy Law. Fear not the *Signs* of Heaven, but the *Sins* on Earth, which have made a Separation between you, and your God. 'Tis injurious to the sweet Influences of the Stars, to charge them with such dire Effects, as Wars, and Pestilences, and Conflagrations: *Divinae Justitiae opera haec sunt* (saith the Father) & *humanae injustitiae*: These are the products of God's Righteousness upon our Unrighteousness. Wherefore glorifie we God in these our Fires, saying with the Prophet, *Righteousness belongs to thee, O Lord, but unto us confusion of Faces, as it is this day, because of our manifold Trespases that we have trespassed against thee.*

San ix.7.  
If yet it be expected I should be more particular, in assigning the very Sins that have occasion'd this heavy Judgment, 'tis a slippery place, and hard to keep firm footing in it. The mysterious Text of God's holy Providence (as I said before) is dark and obscure; and so much



the more, because there are so many Interpreters, (for though there be no infallible Judge of the Sense of it, yet all Fingers itch to be doing;) their Conjectures so various, and full of contradiction, so tainted and debauched with private prejudice, that they do but *σπελάειν*, wrest it unskilfully, as they do the other holy Text, *Convertunt in mentem suam* (as the *Æthiopic* turns that place in *S. Peter*) torture, and torment it, till it confess their own Sense. As for the many spiteful, and unrighteous *Glosses* upon the sad Text of our present Calamity, (on which every Faction amongst us hath a *Revelation*, hath an *Interpretation*;) I will not mention, much less imitate them. *Iustus Accusator sui*, saith the *Wiseman*: 'Tis a righteous thing for every Man to suspect himself, to look first into the plague of his own heart, and to be ready to say with the Disciples, *Master, Is it not I?* We are All overapt to charge one another foolishly enough; to take *S. Peter's* counsel, *ἡλέως ᾤει*, to be kinde and favorable to our selves in our Interpretations and Censures; but God, me thinks, at present seems to accuse us All.

When a Judgment is particular and reacheth but a few, we have a savage promptness in condemning the Sufferers, with, *This is God's just judgment for such a thing*, which we, it seems, like

like not, though perhaps God himself doth. So long as the Thunder-bolt flies over our own Heads, we hug our selves, and All is well; 'tis our dear Pastime, and a high Voluptuousness to sit and censure others, and flatter our selves, that we are more righteous than they. To meet with this ill Humor, God hath reacht us now an Universal Stroke that comes home to every Man: So that 'tis as our Prophet states it

Cap. xxiv. 2. in the beginning of this Sermon, *As with the Prince and the Priest* (for כהן is both) *so with the people; as with the Master and the Mistress, so with the Servant; as with the Buyer and the Borrower, so with the Seller and the Lender; In fine, He is no Englishman that feels not this Blow: And therefore as the Judgment is Universal, let us give glory to God, and confess, that the Sin is so too, saying with the good Nehemiah, Thou art just, O God, in All that is brought upon us; on our King, and on our Princes; on our Priests, and on our Prophets; on our Fathers; and on all thy People: For thou hast done Right, but we have All done Wickedly. God give us Grace to take every one the shame that belongs properly to himself, and to joyn heartily together in a full Chorus at the last, repeating that excellent Exomologesis of holy David, with which I began this point, and shall now conclude it, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just*

Cap. ix. 32,  
33.

are thy Judgements. But there is another yet 23  
behinde—

Lastly, Give God the Glory of his Mercy too; that must in no wise be forgotten. 'Tis the priviledge and prerogative of Mercy, that it mixeth it self in all God's Works; even in Justice it self too. He sendeth forth *Lightnings with the Rain* (saith the Psalmist) he bringeth the Winds out of his Treasuries. Strange Furniture, one would think, for a Treasury, Storms, and Tempests! But there is so very much of Mercy even in God's Judgments too, that they also deserve a place amongst his Treasures, ay and amongst ours too. For he licenseth not a Wind, or a Storm, lets not flie a flash of Lightning, or a Ball of Fire, but a Mercy goes along with it; comes flying to us (if we miss it not by our Negligence or Inadvertency) upon the Wings of that Wind; and discovers it self to us even by the Light of those Fires. And therefore turn not away your eyes in Horror, but study the late *Conflagration*: And even in the Dust and Ashes of our City, if we sift and examine them well, we may finde rich Treasures of Mercy hidden.

Mercy first, That God spar'd us, and preserv'd us so long For without his Divine Manutency, our strongest Fabricks had faln immediately upon their very Builders. He, that made

300  
St Ambros  
Suo jure  
nibus De  
operibus su  
peringredie  
& superna  
tas.

Pl. cxxxv.

all things at first, by preserving makes them still; new makes them every Moment; and  
poc. iv. 11. *for his Will's sake alone they were, and are created.* He carries Nature always in his Bosom, fostering and cherishing her; and that not onely, as she came out of his own hand, and bears the Impresses of his infinite Wisdom and Power; but as we have transform'd and disguis'd her by our petty Skill; as she is fetter'd and shackeld by our silly Artifices: Even the World of Fancy too, the poor Attempts and Bunglings of Art, our Houses of Dirt and Clay (which we call Palaces, and so please our selves in) would quickly fall asunder, and moulder all into the Dust they consist off, did not an Almighty Hand uphold them. If he keep not the House and the City, in vain the Builder builds, and the Watchman wakes, and the Centinel stands *perdu*. And therefore give we him the glory of this Mercy, saying, *Thanks be to the Lord, who so long shew'd us marvellous*  
Ex. 23. *great Kindness, I say not with the Psalm, in a strong City, (though the strongest without Him is weakness) but in a very weak One: A City in the Meanness of the Materials, the Oldness of the Buildings, the Straitness of some Streets, the ill Situation of others, and many like Inconveniences, so expos'd to this dismal Accident, that it must needs have been long*

since in Ashes, had not his miraculous Mercy 25.  
preserv'd it, who, so long as He pleaseth (and  
that is just so long as we please Him) con-  
tinues the Fire to us useful and safe, service-  
able, and yet innocent, with as much ease, as  
he lays it asleep, and quiet in the Bosom of a  
Flint.

Mercy again, That he afflicts us at all; that 2.  
we are yet in his School; that he hath not quite  
given us over, and turn'd us out as unteachable  
and incorrigible. *Felix, cui Deus dignatur ira-*  
*sci,* saith *Tertullian*; in *David's* Language, *Bless-* Ps. xciv. 12.  
*ed is the Man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and*  
*teachest him in thy Law;* send'st him thy Judg-  
ments, and learn'st him thy Righteousness. But  
to sin, and not be punisht, is the forest punish-  
ment of all, saith *S. Chrysostome*. *Dimisit eos se-*  
*cundum desideria Cordis,* He suffer'd them to walk Ps. lxxxii. 13.  
after their own Hearts Lusts, That's a dreadful  
portion: Let them alone, *Why should they be* Isai. i. 5.  
*stricken any more?* That's the prosperity of *Fools* Prov. i. 32.  
that destroys them, as *Solomon*; or as *David*  
phraseth it; this is for God to rain Snakes upon Ps. xi. 6.  
the ungodly: A horrible Tempest indeed! as he  
there calls it, and worse then the Fire and Brim-  
stone in the same Verse.

Mercy too, That he afflicts us himself, keeps 3.  
us still under his own Discipline; and hath not  
yet given us over unto the Will of our Adver- Ps. xxvii. 1.

series. The hand of an Enemy poysons the Wound: His Malice or his Insolence doubles and trebles the Vexation. The Malignity of the Instrument may invenime a Scratch into a Gangrene. But the Blessed hand of God, even when it strikes, drops Balsom. His very Rods are bound up in filk, and softness, and dipt before-hand in Balm: He wounds, that he may heal, and in wounding heals: *Una, eademque Manus Vulnus, openique*— And therefore may we never be beaten by the hand of a cruel, and insulting Slave: But let our Righteous Lord himself smite us, and it shall be a Kindness; let him correct us, and it shall be an excellent Oyl. O let us still fall into the Hands of God (for great are his Mercies) but let us not fall into the hands of Men.

4. Mercy lastly in the Degree of the Affliction; That he hath punisht us less than our Iniquities deserve; afflicted us in Measure; corrected us in Judgment, not in his Fury, for then we had been utterly brought to Nothing: That We have had our Lives for a prey, and are as so many Fire-brands pluckt out of the Burning. And therefore, Why should a living man complain? Say we rather as Abraham did in the case of Sodom, when he had that horrible scene of Vengeance now in his Eye, We are but Dust and Ashes: Not onely Dust in the course of

Eccl. 5.

Sam. xiv.

Gen. iii. 39.

Gen. xviii.



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 a far sharper Dodour; deserve that God should  
 bring us to *Dof*, may even turn us to *After*  
 too, as our Houses; It is of the *Land's Mercies*, Lam. iii. 22  
 that We our selves also are not consumed, because  
 his Compassions fail not; that any part of our  
 City is still remaining; that God hath left us  
 yet a Holy place to assemble in, solemnly to ac-  
 knowledge (as we do this Day) his most mira-  
 culous Mercy: That when all our Wit was puz-  
 zeld, and all our Industry tied out; when the  
 Wind was at the Highest, and the Fire at the  
 Hottest, and all our Hopes were now giving up  
 the ghost, Then He, whose Season is our great-  
 est Extremity; He, who stayeth his rough Wind Cap. xxvii. 8  
 in the Day of the East-wind, as 'tis in the next  
 Chapter; He, who alone sets Bounds to the  
 Rage of the Waters, restrain'd also on a sud-  
 den, the Fury of this other merciless and un-  
 ruly Element, by the Interposition of his Al-  
 mighty Hucusque, Hitherto shalt thou go, and  
 no further. Ay this deserves indeed to be the  
 Matter of a Song: Joy in the Lord upon so  
 great an Occasion, upon so noble an Experi-  
 ence, fits not unhandsome on the Brow of so  
 sad a Day as this is. It shall be said in that Day, Cap. xxv. 9  
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Ps. cxli. 5.

Sam. xiv.

4.

Gen. iii. 39.

Gen. xviii.

7.

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us ; This is the Lord, we will be glad, and re-  
joyce in his Salvation : — The third, and last  
part (we shall mention) of God's Due, the  
Glory of his Mercy.

2.

And now having thus clear'd and secur'd the  
Fountain of Righteousness, in the Discharge of  
some part of our Duty to God (where regular-  
ly it must begin ; ) it remains, *Ut ducatur Ri-  
vus Justitiæ de fonte Pietatis*, as S. Gregory  
speaks : It must not be a Fountain seal'd, or shut  
up within its self ; (Religion is not, as some  
would have it, a *Supersedes* to Common  
Honesty ; the performing our Duty towards  
God, no Discharge of our Duty to Man : ) In  
the next place it should run down like a River,  
in mighty Streams of Righteousness to all our  
Neighbors round about us ; the other great  
Branch, the second Table, or (if you will) the  
other Hemisphere in this great Globe of Right-  
eousness. And here, *Ecce novæ Hyadas, a-  
linquæ Oriona* — So many new Asterisms  
and Constellations of Vertues appear, that the  
time will not give leave to number them, or call  
them all by their Names : I can onely touch  
lightly the greater Circles, some of the more  
comprehensive Lines and Measures of them in  
these few Generals ; and so pass on.

'Tis Righteousness Indefinitely *First*, and so  
 Universally. So that 'twill not be sufficient to  
 take forth some part of it in God's School, a  
 line or two, it may be, of our great Lesson,  
 and neglect the Rest; to study some one  
 Page or Paragraph, and tear all the Book be-  
 sides; to break the Tables (to far worse  
 Effect than *Moses* did) and content our selves  
 with some sorry Fragment: No, What ever  
 goes under the common style of Universal  
 Justice; Whatever falls within the large Bo-  
 som of that comprehensive *Epitome*, into which  
 our Lord himself abridg'd the Law and the  
 Prophets, *All things whatsoever ye would, that* Matth. vii. 12  
*Men should do to you, do ye even so to them;*  
 Whatever comes within compass of that *Νόμος*  
*Βασιλικός*, as *S. James* calls it, the *Royal Law* (the Jam. ii. 8,  
 latter part of the holy *Institutes*, the other  
 tome of the Christian *Pandects*, the second great  
*Commandment* like the first, as our Saviour  
 styles it) *Thou shalt love thy Neighbor as thy* Matth. xxii.  
*self;* Even all the Offices and Instances of Du-  
 ty between Man and Man; (Reverence and  
 Obedience to our Superiors, Courtesie and  
 Humanity to our Equals; Kindness and Con-  
 descension to our Inferiors; Gratitude and  
 Thankfulness to our Benefactors; Justice and  
 Upright-dealing towards All: Truth in our  
 Words, and Faithfulness in our Trusts, and

Constancy to our Promises, and Candor, and Sincerity, and Honesty in all our Actions: And yet further and higher, (for 'tis a Righteousness improv'd, and heightned, or at least interpreted by our Lord into Love, and so obligeth us beyond the strict Measures of Common Justice, and not onely renders, what is legally due, but gives and forgives beyond it;) Equity and Moderation to those, that are any way obnoxious to us; Mildness and Gentleness to those, that have any way offended us; Sympathie and Compassion towards them that suffer; Mercy and Bounty to them that need; Goodness, and Peaceableness, and Charity to all the World:) These are all parts of this great Lesson, and whatever else may help to denominate us *The Righteous Nation that keepeth the Truth* (as 'tis in the second Verse of this Chapter) or *the City, in which dwells Righteousness*.

2.  
Ps. cix. 96. But then as 'tis Righteousness indefinitely, (*the Commandment exceeding broad*, as David speaks, wide in the Extension; so is it also as Deep in the Intension,) 'tis Righteousness *Internally and Spiritually* too; as being a Righteousness taught us by God's, and not by Man's Judgments onely, and consequently must have an Effect proportionable: 'Tis when Thy Judgments are in the Earth, Men will learn—As the Jews, while their fear towards God was



*taught them by the Precepts of Men, drew near to him, and honored him with their Mouths onely, but remov'd their Hearts far away from him, Isai.*  
 xxix. 13 : Upon the same Ground, our Righteousness will never exceed the Righteousness of Scribes, and Pharisees Hypocrites, must needs prove Noise, and Appearance onely, a meer and a vain Semblance, if we learn it in no higher School than Mans, take it forth from the XII Tables onely, not from the Two, and have no other Tutor in it than *Solon*, or *Lycurgus*, or *Justinian*. For the Derivation can return no higher than the Fountain-Head ; and what is taught us onely by the Statutes of *Omri*, or at *Cesar's Judgment-seat*, will never come up to what the perfect Law of God requires. While we are under this lower, and external Discipline onely, if we can but skulk, and shift, and play least in sight, and seem to be Righteous, though we are not so ; *Recti in Curia*, though not *up-right in Heart* : Or , if we be discovered and impleaded too, if we can, whether by Power or Artifice, break through the venerable Cobweb, and run under the miserable shelter of a Temporal Indemnity at these lower Bars : Why, All is well ; with *Solomon's Wanton* we

Prov. xxx, 20

wipe our Mouths, and are suddenly very Virgins again, not onely safe, but innocent too. But though Humane Laws exact onely outward

Compliances, assume not to themselves to judge the Heart, because they cannot discern it, nor take Cognizance of secret Thoughts and Purposes, further than they are declar'd by overt Acts : Yet God is a Spirit, and a Discerner of the inmost Thoughts and Intentions ; and his Law Spiritual too, and given to the Spirit ; and the Righteousness taught in his School, is not a Carcase, or an Outside only , but a living Soul, and a Spirit of Righteousness : And by consequence it stays not in the outward Act (the proper Object of Humane Laws and Provisions ; ) restrains not only open violences ( such as the Judgment-seat of Man condemns, and the Scaffold, or the Gibbet take notice of ; ) not only smooths and polisheth the outward Garb , to render that plausible in the eyes of the World : But goes yet further, and deeper, even to the Heart ; composeth the whole Inner-Man too, and labours to approve that to the Righteous Judge, who sees not as Man sees ; and in fine, calls us up to that glorious height of the Primitive Christians in *Justin Martyr*, who obey'd indeed the Municipal Laws of their Countrey, but out-liv'd them too, and surmounted them far , *Τὸς ἰδίους βίους ὑπὲρ τῶ νόμου*, as he speaks : they contented not themselves with so scant Measures, but flew a higher and a nobler pitch, aiming at a more refin'd and perfect Righteous-

ness, the worthy Effect of Gods Judgments, and not of Mans only; taught in his School alone, and not at our Tribunals. And then

3.  
Lastly, 'Tis Righteousness *Positively* and *Affirmatively* too. For though the Decalogue is almost all over *Negative* in the Style and Form of it; yet, our Lord, by reducing all the Precepts of it to one *Affirmative* (*Love*), and also by his *Affirmative* Glosses or Additions to it in his *Sermon* on the Mount, seems to have authorised the Rule of their Exposition, receiv'd generally by Christian Divines, *That the Negative still infers the Affirmative*, and that there are many *Yeas* conceal'd in the Bosom of every such *No*. So that however 'tis indeed a part of our Duty, Not to Murther, and not to Slander, and not to Covet, and the like, (an Obligation consequent upon God's Prohibition; and he takes it well, when for his sake we abstain from the Evil, we are inclin'd or strongly solicited to, and so accepts graciously our very *Nothing*, as I may call it, our *not doing* amiss; thus giving us leave to inclose, as it were, a part of our Waste, and to raise some Revenue upon it: ) Yet this is so much short of the Height of the Lesson we are to learn in God's School, that 'tis only the unlearning something that might obstruct it; so far from making us truly *Righteous*, that it can only style us *Innocent*, and set us *Extra vitia*

rather than *Intra virtutem*. We must not then content our selves with a *Negative* Righteousness; nor confine, and limit it within the sorry Bounds of the Pharisaical Boast, *That we are not, as other men are, Extortioners or Unjust*: In some Cases he is unjust too, that gives not his own, as well as he that takes away what is anothers: In the Sacred Dialect Almes-deeds are Justice too; even Acts of Mercy, and Bounty to those that need them, *stricti Juris*, a part of our Righteousness sometimes so indispensable, as not to be omitted without Sin. And therefore glorifie thy self no longer, that thou do'st Harm to no Man:

— *Cum dicis stultum, qui donat Amico.*  
*Qui paupertatem levat, attoliturque propinqui,*  
*Et spoliare docet* — could the Heathen Poet say. He robs his Neighbor, that relieves him not: He spoils his Friend, that in some Cases doth not supply him. And though 'tis well (*a good Degree*) if we can say with *S. Paul*, *I have wronged no Man*; yet he onely is perfectly blameless in this kinde, *Qui ne in eo quidem ulli noceat, quo prodesse desistat*, as *S. Jerome* excellently; who doth not this Evil to his Neighbor, that he omits to do him all the Good he can. Thou didst not burn thy Neighbors house, (*a strange piece of uncouth Righteousness!*) But do'st thou receive him into thy own,

Luc. xxiii. 11.

Ps. cxiii. 9.

Isai. lviii. 7, 8.

Juvenal Sat.  
iv.

Cor. vii. 2.

b. i. Epist.  
ad Cestianam

now he is harborless? Thou hast not oppress'd, or impoverisht thy Brother; 'Tis well: But is thy Abundance the Supply of his *Want* in this present Exigent? thy Superfluity, the Ransom and Redemption of his extream Necessities? If not, Remember, that *Dives* is in torments, not for robbing *Lazarus*, but for not relieving him: And the dreadful Decretory Sentence proceeds Matth. xxv. at the last Day, not for oppressing the poor, but for not feeding, not cloathing, not visiting them: A Reflection very common indeed; yet never more proper or seasonable, than at this time, when God presents us an Object of Charity, the greatest, I think, and the most considerable that was ever offer'd to this Nation, and when Heaven and Earth expect, that something extraordinary should be done.

**I** Have now opened the Book, and laid it before you, and given you a short Draught of this very important Lesson: A Lesson so considerable, that our Wise and Good God thinks it worth the while to rout Armies, and sink Navies; to burn up Cities, and turn Kingdoms upside down; to send Wars, and Plagues, and Conflagrations amongst us; to set open all his Schools, and ply all his severest Methods to teach it us the more effectually. Think now, that he looks down this Day from Heaven to

take notice of our Proficiency ; to see how far we are advanc'd by these his Judgments in learning Righteousness. And is it possible, we should stand out any longer ? Can we still resist so powerful a Grace ? Are not the parts of the Text by this time, happily met together ? and the Truth of it accomplisht, and exemplified in us to the full ? ---- Gods Judgments on us, and his Righteousness in us ? Who would not think, and hope so ? But as St. *Jerome* complains of his Age ( which was indeed very calamitous ) *Orbis Romanus ruit, & tamen Cervix nostra non flectitur* : The World sinks and cracks about our Ears, and yet our Neck as stiff, and the Crest of our Pride as lofty, and as erect as ever. How few are they that repent in Dust and Ashes, even Now, that God hath laid our City in Dust, and our Houses in Ashes ! Look we first upon the Text, and then upon our selves, and we must ingenuously acknowledge, That whatever Abatements or Diminutions to the Height of the design'd Event of God's Judgments upon us, the Text, or any *Version* of it note, or imply, our wretched evil Lives do but too plainly express and justifie. For ----

1. Who are they that are said here to learn Righteousness in the Text ? Not alwayes the Afflicted themselves, it seems ; but some others that stand by and look on. For 'tis not



to be omitted, that the phrase manifestly varies in the parts of the Proposition: *Judgments in the Earth*, or upon the Land, some particular Countrey; and *the World* at large, or some few in it *learns Righteousness*. Thus *Tyrus shall be devour'd with Fire*, saith the Prophet: *Askelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza and Ekron shall be very sorrowful*: But not a word how *Tyrus* herself is affected. God forbid it should be so with us! May it never be said, that any of our Neighbors make better use of our Calamities, than we our selves! Have we any so hard-hearted amongst us, that can look upon so sad a Spectacle, as if they sate all the while in the Theatre, or walkt in a Gallery of Pictures; little more concern'd, than at the Siege of *Rhodes*; or the Ruines of *Troy*? Shall any Neighbor-City say wisely ---- *Mea res agitur, jam proximus ardet Ucalegon* ----? Shall our enemies themselves (the Sober and the Wise amongst them, at the least) tremble at the Relation, and we continue stupid, and senseless? Shall *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* resent it, and we not regard it as we ought? Nay, shall *China* and *Pern* (it may be) *Surat* and *Mexico*, both the *Indies* hear, and be affected with it, and we our selves insensible? Shall the Inhabitants of the World abroad warm themselves at our Fires, with kindly and holy Heats; while in the mean

Zach. ix. 4, 5.

time our Repentings are not kindled, nor our Charity inflam'd, and our Devotion as cold and frozen as ever? Shall our Mountain (which we said in our jolly pride should never be removed) be fulminated, and thunder-strook, but the Blessed shower, that follows, the Instruction, that descends after, like the Rain, slide off to the Vallies, to Others, that are round about us?

Luc. xix. 41. Our Lord *wept* over *Jerusalem*, because she *knew not then* (at forty years distance) *the time of her Visitation*; for the Days will come, saith He, *when there shall not be left one stone upon another*: But Wo is me! Our day is come already, and our Visitation now actually upon us; and yet I fear, we will not know it, as we ought. For—

2. Reflect a little upon the *Tense* of the *Verb*, how that varies too in the parts of the Proposition: The Judgements *Are* in the Earth, and the Inhabitants *Will* learn—— (So the Vulgar Latin and the English: ) 'Tis still *per verba de futuro*. For we list not to hand-fast our selves to God Almighty, to make our selves over to him by present Deed of Gift; but would fain, forsooth, bequeath our selves to him a Legacy in our last Will and Testament. Ay but *In Necessitatibus nemo liberalis*: 'Tis not a free or a noble Donation, which we bestow, when we can keep it no longer our selves: For

such a Bequest we may thank Death, rather  
 than the Testator, saith *S. Chrysostome*. But we  
 are all Clinicks in this point; would fain have a  
 Baptism in Reserve, a Wash for all our Sins,  
 when we cannot possibly commit them any  
 more. Like *Felix* the unjust Governor, when  
*S. Paul* reasons of Righteousness, our Heads  
 begin to ake, and presently we adjourn, with,  
*Go thy way for this time*; *Καὶ οὕτως ἀπαλλάσσεται*,  
 (as he pretended;) when we have Time and  
 Opportunity, and convenient Leisure (which  
 we read not, that he ever found) in plain Eng-  
 lish, when we have nothing else to do, or can  
 do nothing else, then we'll take forth this  
 Lesson; — Learn Righteousness, as *Cato* did  
 Greek, *jam Septuagenarius*, just when we are  
 a dying; — Begin then to con our part, when  
 we are ready to be hift off the Stage, and Death  
 is now pulling off our Properties. But take we  
 heed in time: He may prove a false Prophet,  
 that promiseth himself to die the Death of the  
 Righteous, when he hath lov'd, and pursu'd the  
 Ways, and Wages of Unrighteousness all his  
 life-long: Who thinks, if he can but shape the  
 last faint Breath he draws into a formal pretence  
 of forgiving all the World, and a flie Desire  
 of being forgiven: Upon these two hangs the  
 whole stress of his Righteousness, he goes out  
 of God's School upon fair terms, and thinks to

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 τὴν δὲ δόξαν  
 αἰών, ἡ  
 ὁμ. xiii.  
 2<sup>a</sup> phil.

Acts xiv.

render a plausible Account of himself. No  
no; the great Lesson of the Text is harder and  
deeper than so: 'Tis that we must sweat for;  
'tis that we may bleed for: 'Tis All, that *Adam*  
lost, and All, that *Christ* came to recover:  
'Tis the Business of our whole life, and 'tis de-  
sperate Folly and Madness to defer to learn it  
till Death, when God now calls us to account  
for it. Though the Verb in some Versions be  
future (as I said) yet still 'tis *Discent Habitatores*;  
we must learn it, while we dwell here  
in the World; and who can secure us that be-  
yond the next Moment? When once we re-  
move hence, there's no School beyond: The  
Platonick *Eruditorium* in *Origen* (a place  
under Ground, I know not where, in which  
separated Souls are suppos'd to learn what they  
mist off, or neglected here) as very a Fable as  
the Platonick Purgatory. As there is no Work,  
nor Labor; so no Devise, nor Knowledge, nor  
Wisdom in the Grave. The Schools are all in  
this World: All beyond is Prison, and Dun-  
geon, and place of Torment, for such as learn  
not their Duty here; Fire without Light, and  
utter Darkness.

3. Again, *They did learn* (so the Syriac, and  
the Interlineary Latin) *when thy Judgments*  
*were in the Earth*: For there is an *Ellipsis* in the  
Original of the former clause, and the Verb

Substantive may be supplied either way, when thy Judgments *Are* or *Were* in the Earth : And the Conjunction may seem to stand fair for the later, נִאֲסָר *in quantum*, or *juxta quod*; נִאֲסָר (as R. David glosseth it) *qua mensura, aut modu*; and so the Syriac, *Qualia Judicia, talem Justitiam didicerunt*: So much Judgment, so much Justice; Righteousness they *did* learn, just while God's Rod was over them, and no longer. Thus while God's Plagues lay heavy upon *Pharaoh*, even that stiff neck bow'd, and that hard heart was softened; As Iron in a quick Fire relents and melts, but take it out of the Furnace, and it grows hard again, nay worse, Churlish and unmalleable: And so he, *When he saw that there was Respite*, saith the Text, or a breathing time, *he hardened his heart*, Ex. viii. 15. And do not we all the same? Like teeming Women, while the pangs are upon us; *we have* Joh. xvi. 21 *sorrow*; when some great Affliction gives us a smart Visit, strikes home, and deep, we seem to be a little sensible: Ay but the Throws once over, *ἐπεὶ οὐ μνηστέον*, saith our Lord, the Woman remembers them no more; and so we, *If but for a little space Grace be shewed us, if God gives us but a little Respite in our Bondage*, like Israel newly returned from Babel, *we straight forget his Commandments*; which made the good Ezra asham'd and blush

to lift up his Face to Heaven ; *Ezra ix.*  
8, 10.

ib. vii. Ep. 7. Happy We, if, as *Pliny* adviseth his friend *Maximus*, *Tales esse sani perseveremus, quales futuros profitemur infirmi* ; if we continue such in Health, as we promise to be upon our sick-beds. But Alas ! *Convalluit ; Mansit, ut ante.* How few with *David* pay the Vows which they spake with their Mouths, when they were in trouble ? Do not the engagements on the sick-bed vanish, like the Dreams of the sick, forgotten, as if they had never been ? I appeal to your own Bosoms ; though affected at first with this late dismal Accident, doth it not prove to you a Nine-days Wonder, and your Thoughts, though much startled at first, by degrees reconcile to it ? Do not your Devotions begin to grow cold with the Fires ; rak'd up, like those dying sparks in dead Ashes, and buried in the Dust ; — *Ignes suppositi Cineri doloso ?* Just as our Prophet states it here, *While thy Judgments were upon them, they learn'd* ; But as it follows immediately, *Fiat Gratia Impia, Let Favor be shew'd to the Wicked*, the least Intermision or kind Interval, and he will not learn Righteousness, saith the Text expressly ; he soon lays by his Book, and gives over. But

fl xvi. 14.  
terf. 10.



4<sup>th</sup> Lastly, What is it that we learn? or, to what good end or purpose? The *Chaldee* Paraphrast interposeth here a very Material and Operative word, *Discent operari, they will learn* *לעבוד* to do, or to work Righteousness. And this Addition shews us another of our Defects; cuts off, I fear, above half the Roll of our Learners at once. We live (as I said) in a learned Age: But in all this Croud and Throng of Learners, how few put themselves in good earnest into God's School? And of them that do, how much fewer yet take forth their Lesson aright?--Learn any thing else they will, but not Righteousness; and if that, any thing, but to do it? But this is not *ὀρθοτεμεῖν*, rightly to divide; this is to mangle the Text, and to saw *Isaiah* asunder again. Would learning, or talking, or pretending serve the turn, we might finde Righteousness enough in the World: We can define it, and distinguish it, criticize upon the Word, and dispute of the Thing without end: We stuff our Heads with the Notion, and tip our Tongues with the Language, and fill the World with our pretences to it: But *Little Children*, saith S. *John*, (O ye World of Learners) *Be not deceived*, (Let no Man seduce you into this piece of *Gnosticism*, as if to learn, or to know, were sufficient; No,) *ὁραὼν*, He that doth Righteousness, he is Righteous. *Non fortia loquimur*

1 Joh.iii. 7.

hil. iii. 16.

cts xi. 26.

*loquimur, sed vivimus*, saith S. Cyprian ; The life of Religion is Doing. What we know, we must practice too ; *Whereto we have already attained, we must walk in it*, saith the Apostle. They, that follow'd Christ, were first indeed call'd *Disciples*, that is, Learners, (for there we must begin ; ) But they soon after commenc'd Christians at *Antioch*, Anointed to Action, as the word implies ; and this Name sticks by them still, as the more essential. Their Oil must not be spent all in the Lamp, *In Schola Sapientiae*, that they may shine by Knowledge ; they must do their Exercises too *In Gymnasio Justitiae*, be anointed to the *Agon*, and to the Combat (as the Champions of old ; ) and if they expect the Crown of Righteousness, must not onely learn Righteousness, but learn to do it.

AND therefore ( to shut up All, and to in-  
force it a little upon such Topicks, as the  
Text, and the sad Face of things amongst us  
suggest ; ) Let us no longer trifle with God Al-  
mighty, now we finde to our cost, that He is  
in good earnest with us. *Be not deceived ; God,*  
*I'm sure, is not mock'd.* 'Tis not our Fasting,  
and looking demure a little, and hanging down  
the Head, like a Bull-rush for a Day ; 'Tis not  
a few Grimaces of Sorrow, a sad word or two,

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or a weeping Eye will serve the turn : — Our hearts must bleed too, our Souls must be afflicted, and mourn for our old Unrighteousnesses, and forsake them too, and renounce them all for ever ; and yet further, take forth new Lessons of Righteousness in all holy Conversations and Godlinesses, as S. Peter speaks, even in All the instances of Piety, and Justice, and Charity, ye heard off even now, or all this holy Discipline of God is lost, and spent in vain upon us. For *this is all the Fruit*, saith our Prophet, *to take away sin* : If that remain still in us, Adversity is a bitter Cup indeed. To keep our sins, and hold them fast, even when God's Judgments are upon us for them, this is with *Copranymus*, to pollute the Fountain that should wash us, to defile the salutary Waters of Affliction, to prophane the holy Fires of God's Furnace, and to pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, to some reigning and domineering sin, some Tyrant-lust or Mistress-passion. Correction without Instruction, this is the Scourge of Asses, not the Discipline of Men, nor the Rod of the Sons of Men. To suffer much, and not to be at all the better for it, 'tis certainly one of the saddest portions that can befall us in this World ; if not the fore-boding and Prognostick of a far sadder yet to come, the very Beginnings of Hell here, the Forecasts of

2 Pet. iii. 1  
Cap. xxvii 9

that Cup of Bitterness, of which the Damned suck out the Dregs.

And wilt thou after all this hide the sweet Morfel under thy Tongue, when thou sensibly perceiv'st it already turning into the Gall of Asps? — Still long for the delicious consecrated portion, and snatch it greedily from God's Altars, though thou seest thy Fingers burn, and thy Nest on fire with it? — Still retain the old Complacence in thy sparkling Cup, though thou feel'st it already biting like a Serpent, and stinging like an Adder? — say

Prov. ix. 17. *still, Stolen Waters are sweet, though like those bitter Ones of Jealousie, thou perceiv'st them carry a Curse along with them into thy very*  
1 Cor. x. 22. *Bowels? Dare we thus provoke the Lord to*  
Job xxxviii. *Jealousie? Are we stronger than He? Gird up*  
3. *now thy loyns like a Man, thou stoutest, and*  
Job xl. 9. *gallantest of the Sons of Earth. Hast thou an*  
Isai. xxxiii. *Arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a*  
14. *Voice like him? Wilt thou set the Briars and*  
Rom. ii. 4. *Thorns of the Wilderness against him in Battel-*  
*Array? or canst thou dwell with everlasting*  
2 Pet. iii. 15. *Burnings? Or despisest thou the Riches of his*  
*Goodness and Forbearance; not knowing (re-*  
*fusing to know) that the Long-suffering of our*  
*Lord is Salvation, and that his Goodness lead-*  
*eth thee to Repentance? If not, know as-*  
*suredly, that thy Hardness and Impenitent*

Heart, do but treasure up for thee, yet a fiercer, 49  
and a more insupportable Wrath.

And therefore let us not flatter our selves,  
nor think that God hath now emptied his Qui-  
ver, and spent all his Artillery upon us : Let us  
not come forth delicately with the foolish *A-*  
*gag* ; saying , *Surely the Bitterness of Death is* 1 Sam. xv. 32  
*past* : No, the Dregs of the Cup of Fury are  
still behinde ; God grant, we be not forc'd at  
last to drink them, and suck them up. *Great*  
*Plagues remain for the ungodly*, saith the *Psalmist*. Ps. xxxii. 11  
*Væ unum abiit ; Ecce duo veniunt. One Wo is*  
*past, but behold there come two Woes more ; for*  
*the rest of Men that were not kill'd by the former*  
*Plagues, repented not*, Apoc. ix. 12, 20. When  
God's Rods and his *Ferulas* (the Discipline of  
Children) are contemn'd , he hath a lash of  
Scorpions to scourge the obstinate. When the  
Ten dreadful Plagues are spent all upon a  
stubborn *Egypt* without effect, there's a Red  
Sea yet in Reserve, that at last swallows All :  
And if our present Afflictions reform us not,  
that we sin no more ; take we heed, lest yet a  
worse thing befall us. Remember, that when  
the Touch of God's little Finger did not terrifie  
us, he soon made us feel the Stroke of his heavy  
Hand. If the more benign, and benedict Me-  
dicines will not work, nor stir us at all, he can  
prepare us a rougher *Recipe*, or a stronger *Dose* ;

retrive and bring back his former Judgements in sharper Degree; or else send upon us new ones, which we never dream off.

The Devil of Rebellion, and Disobedience, which not long since posselt the Nation, rent and tore it till it som'd again, and pin'd away in lingring Consumptions; that cast it oft times into the Fire, and oft times into the Water (calamities of all sorts) to destroy it; is now through God's Mercies cast out, and we seem to sit quiet, and sober at the feet of our Deliverer, cloth'd, and in our right Minds again. But yet this *ill* spirit, this restless Fury (this unquiet, and dreadful *Alastor*, the eldest son of *Nemesis*, and heir apparent to all the Terrors and Mischiefs of his Mother) walks about day and night, seeking Rest, and finds none; and he saith in his heart, I will return some time or other to my House, from whence I came out. Oh let us take heed of provoking that God, who alone chains up his Fury, least for our Sins he permit him to return once more, with seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and so our last Estate prove worse than the former.

The Sword of the Angel of Death, which the last year cut down almost a hundred thousand of us, may seem to have been glutted with our Blood, and to have put up it self



into the scabbard. *Quiesce & file*, as the Prophet speaks : God grant it may rest here, and be still. But, as it followes there, *How can it be quiet, if the Lord give it a new Commission against us ?* Methinks I see the hand still upon the Guard, and unless we prevent it by our speedy Repentance, it may quickly be drawn again more terrible than ever, new furnished, and whetted with the keener edge, and point, our wretched Ingratitude must needs have given it. The Sun of Righteousness was ready to rise upon us with healing in his Wings, to clear our Heaven again, and to scatter the Cloud of the last years unhealthiness. But yet, methinks, this slow-moving cloud hangs still o're our Heads, hovers yet in View, with God knows how many Plagues and Deaths in the Bosom of it : and without our serious Amendment we have no Rainbow to assure us, that we shall not again be drencht in that horrible Tempest. Though the best Naturalists say, *That great publick Fires* Diemerbr. d  
Peste Novis  
mag. *are a proper Remedy for the Plague*, Yet God, if he be angry can send a ruffling Wind into the very Ashes of our City, blow them into the Air, and turn them, as those of the Egyptian Furnace, into a Blain, and a Botch, and a Plague sore upon us. Ex. ix. 8,

Nay even out of those dead Ashes can He raise yet a fiercer Flame, to consume what still remains. *As the lightning comes out of the East, saith our Lord, and shineth even unto the West, so shall my coming be, (sc: to destroy Jerusalem,) and wherever the Carcase is, will the Eagles be gathered together,* Matth. xxiv. Fire is the Eagle in Nature ; nothing in the Elementary World mounts so high to its place, and stoops so low to its prey : the two properties God himself ascribes to that Bird, *Job xxxix. 27-30.* And if we still refuse obstinately to be gathered, like Chickens under our Lord's Wing, he can again let loose this Bird of Prey, this Eagle of Heaven upon us ; and from the East, where it began before, flie it home like Lightning *εως δυσμῶν* even to the utmost West, to seize, and to devour where ever there is the least Quarry remaining.

Or if this move us not, let us remember that we have another City upon the Waters, a floating Town of moveable Forts and Castles, the Walls and Bulwarks of the Nation ; stronger than those of Brass, the Fable speaks off. As we desire that God would ever fill *their Sails with prosperous Gales,* and still bring them home with Honor, and Victory, and good Success, Let us take heed that we fight not

against them too. Our Sin, like a Talent of 52  
Lead, may sink them to the Bottom ; Our  
Lusts, and Passions, and Animosities may fire  
them ; our Drunkenness, and deep Excesses  
may drown them ; our Vollies of Oaths and  
Blasphemies may pierce them ; nay, our Sedi-  
tious Murmurings, and Privy Whisperings may  
blow them over. For God is *Piorum Rupes, Reo-  
rum Scopulus* ; a Rock to found the Just upon,  
but a Shelf to shipwrack, and confound the Un-  
righteous.

And yet all these are but the common Roads,  
and ordinary Instances of God's Displeasures :  
But he hath also, besides, and beyond all these,  
unknown *Treasures of Wrath*, vast stores of Ps. xc. 23  
hidden Judgments ( for *who knows the Power,*  
or the extent of *his Anger* ? ) Laid up in those  
secret Magazines, where his Judgments are,  
when they are not in the Earth, reserv'd as his  
dreadful Artillery *against the time of trouble,*  
*against the day of Battel and War*, as he speaks  
himself, *Job xxxviii. 23.* Oh let us take heed  
of *treasuring up to our selves Wrath against that*  
*day of Wrath, and the Revelation of his righteous*  
*Judgment.* Rom. i. 5.

And now what shall I say more, if all that  
hath been said hitherto, prove ineffectual ?  
The Text affords yet one Expedient, as the  
*Chaldee Paraphrast* may seem to have under-  
stood

וְיִינֶהֱמָה  
לְפָנָיו, &c.

stood it: *Because thy Judgment*, saith he (not *מִשְׁפָּט* as in the Hebrew, but *נִדְוִי* or *נִדְוִי נִדְוִי* as the Jews call it, and *S. Jude* from them; *The Judgment of the great Day*) because that Judgment, though not as yet in the Earth, is yet *fixt*, and appointed, and prepared for all the Earth *עֲרֵב* in the Hebrew it self too, for rather than in the Earth) therefore most certainly, if at all, or for any thing, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.

But if they put far from them this evil day too, as if they had made a Covenant with Death and with Hell; if they finally refuse to come under God's Discipline, and to take forth to themselves Lessons of Righteousness here, they shall then be made themselves great Lessons, and dreadful examples of God's Righteousness to all the World. If they will not glorifie God in these Fires, as they ought, nor walk in the light of them; let them remember that there are Fires without Light, where none glorifie him, but by suffering the Eternal Vengeance of their sins. There must they learn by saddest experience, who obstinately refuse the more gainful Method, *ὅτι φοβερόν ἐμμοῖν*, That 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. For our enemies here must die, and our storms at last blow over, and our Fires, you see, though

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never so great, in time go out and vanish : But  
God lives ; hath a Worm too, that dies not (for  
those that live not as they ought ) and a fire  
that is not quenched : The *Babylonian* Furnace,  
seven times hotter than usual, a cool walk to  
that ; all our *Vulcans* and *Etnas*, our *He-*  
*clas* and *Andes* faint types and shadows of it ;  
the great Conflagration, we so lately trembled  
at, and still bewail but a Spark to that infernal  
*Tophet*, but a painted Fire to that dreadful *Mon-*  
*gibel* ; even *Everlasting Burnings*. From which,  
God of his tender Mercy deliver us All ; and  
give us Grace in this our Day, (the Day of his  
Judgments) so to learn Righteousness, and so  
to do it, that at the last, and great Day of  
Judgment, when he shall come again to  
Account with us for all our Learning, and for  
all our Doings, we may through his Mercy re-  
ceive the Crown of Righteousness, for his sake  
alone, who so dearly bought it for us, even Jesus  
Christ the Righteous : To whom with the Fa-  
ther, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed by us,  
and all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth,  
Blessing, Honor, Glory, and Power, henceforth  
and for evermore. *Amen.* // = *H* // =

*Miserere Mei Deus.*

FINIS.